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Tuesday, February 5, 1963

EXTRACT

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Mr. Lipscomb. What was the CIA estimate of personnel on September 19 or October 22? I notice the chart says "Agreed Intelligence community estimate."

Mr. McCone. Can you answer that, Mr. Cline?

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Mr. Cline. Yes, sir. The CIA official position, of course, is always the agreed intelligence estimate, and those were the figures published in our bulletins which were worked out with other intelligence agencies. When I advise Mr. McCone, our Director, of what our own analysts' view is, we sometimes advise him that we think the official estimates are on the low or high side. Generally speaking, I would say, as his report to the President in August indicated, we were advising him throughout that period that we thought the official estimates were considerably in error on the low side, that in time we would gather intelligence which would prove that the figures were larger. My recollection is that in each of the periods you asked about, our unofficial, in-

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house view was that the correct figure would be something like that listed here about a month later. We were still below the actual figures.

Mr. Lipscomb. I know we cannot rectify the figures, but to come me it is of concern that we are analyzing our intelligence data now, and when it goes from you someplace else, they do not downgrade it too much.

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Secretary Ball appeared before the Select Committee on Export Control on October 3, and he read at that time for public consumption the official estimates of equipment and personnel in Cuba. Your chart on equipment does not concur with Mr. Ball's testimony at that time. In fact, in some areas he had more equipment, and he listed at that time, October 3, a Wednesday, 4500 personnel in the area. Then throughout his testimony he kept referring to hard intelligence and good intelligence. He said at one point, in answer to a question:

"Our information with regard to the availability of armaments in Cuba, including the shipments which have been received in recent build-up, is, we believe, quite complete. Our intelligence is very good and very hard."

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Then at another point, when we were talking about Soviet ships going in and the equipment that was aboard those ships, he said that they observed the equipment on those ships, that they knew substantially what was on those ships going into Cuba. That was on October 3.

At another point he said that our antisubmarine patrol and other Navy equipment observed Soviet ships as well as Soviet bloc shipments going in there.

204 All through his testimony he implied very strongly that all the information he submitted was factual and accurate and that there was no military build-up of any significance that would be of offensive danger to our country.

The reason the American people are concerned today is that it is getting blown down again. Yet, information coming out of the Senate and the House and in public comment indicates the same thing that was happening in September and early October of 1962. That is why the committee--at least, this is the way I and others see it--are questioning the validity, not of you but of how the figures are handled. I have the testimony here. I do not want to take the time to go into it. I believe that Secretary Ball at that time was blowing down all of the information that was coming in and substantiating the figures that the Administration was giving out at that time.

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Has there been any correction, any improvement put into effect so now the American people can say, yes, the information that is being given to them in the press is accurate and can be relied upon as being as secure as intelligence information can be? I know it cannot always be accurate and to the point.

Mr. McCone. Mr. Lipscomb, I am not familiar with Secretary Ball's statements on October 9. I am sure they are very sincere and represented his best judgment and his best interpretation of the information available to him.

I would like that equipment chart to be put up again, if you will, please.

Mr. Lipscomb. I do not mean to interrupt, Mr. Director, but is he not giving out official information and not his own opinion when he does this?

Mr. McCone. I know of no inventory of equipment produced during September and October. You will note that that inventory is November 1. You might ask why it is November 1. The reason it is November 1 is that that was developed from an analysis of dozens of U-2 photographs taken of the entire island, not once but frequently, from October 14 up to November 1. From those photographs we were able to reach a conclusion concerning the complement of military equipment that had arrived in Cuba during

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September and October. The February 1 column includes the results of the analysis of the photography taken since November 1, and also a reappraisal of that taken earlier. These things are under continuous study and review by our photoanalysts. We have not produced and I have not seen, although Mr. Ball does have within the State Department, of course, an intelligence organization of his own--I have not seen an inventory of this type dated the 1st of October, have you?

Mr. Malone. No, sir, I have not.

Mr. Lipscomb. In his statement he states that his information is up to date as of October 2. He was questioned on how up to date he was because Mr. Kitchin, the chairman of the committee at that time, questioned him about air-breathing missiles of 130 nautical mile range and then another type of missile. That afternoon he came back with the information that the latest intelligence was that there were no missiles of a range of longer than 25 or 30 miles on the island.

Mr. McCone. I think he was correct in air-breathing missiles. The only air-breathing missiles that we know of have been the surface-to-air coastal defense missiles, which are about 30-mile range.

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Mr. Mahon. Mr. Director, to get to the major point of Mr. Lipscomb's inquiry, as I understand it, the major point to me is this: We did not know what was happening with respect to the build-up in weapons and manpower last September and early October. How do we know that the figures and conclusions are any more responsible and adequate and correct now than then? In other words, as I understand it, he is undertaking to equate that time with this and postulates a similar situation. How can you meet that situation?

Mr. McCone. I can answer that in this way: During the month of September we overflew only part of Cuba because we had overflown the western sector on the 29th of August and the 5th of September. The Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance of the United States Intelligence Board placed in the first priority a survey of the parts of Cuba that had not been seen. We were frustrated during September because of bad weather. As a consequence, we did not get a look at the western part of Cuba until the night of October 14. This was prompted by reports, the first of which, as I have said, we received in Washington on the 21st of September and came in each day after that, which were the initial reports directed towards the possibility of offensive missiles as contrasted with a great number of reports on surface-to-air missiles and short-range missiles.

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Since October, we have flown every day, and we have flown 210 flights, and we are depending on that information together with information from these other sources I spoke of at first, to piece together the intelligence that we feel is as reasonably correct as it is possible to produce under the restrictions with respect to penetrating on-site inspection, which we just do not have.

Mr. Mahon. But you have not quite said, as I see it, that we have greater reason to place confidence in your present estimate than we had to place confidence in your estimate back in late September and October.

Mr. McCone. I can say categorically that you do have.

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Mr. Minshall. Why do you have that assurance today and you did not as you look back to September and October of last year? Is it solely because of your photography?

Mr. McCone. That is correct.

Mr. Lipscomb. Just one more question. A statement such as Mr. Ball made gives a wrong impression. It gives a sense of security. It is too bad. I asked the question what cargo was on the Soviet ship. I said, "Have you any indication what cargo was on these ships?" Mr. Ball said: "We may have. I do not have it here. We usually know in quite specific terms what cargoes

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have been carried by the Soviet ships, those directly under Soviet operation."

Yet, if you put that statement together with the date of October 3, from October 3 to October 14, I think you mentioned, all of these missiles, all of these troops and everything went in to Cuba. Nobody has told the American people any different. So I sit here, uneducated on intelligence matters, and I believe something went wrong between October 3 and October 14 that you did not see or somebody did not see or somebody did not recognize. Is this the case?

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Mr. McCone. Nothing that I know of went wrong.

Mr. Lipscomb. How did it happen and, if it happened, how has it been corrected, other than photosurveillance?

Mr. McCone. I do not quite get the import of the question.

Mr. Lipscomb. Am I wrong in assuming from the public record that the build-up of missiles and the problem of the offensive occurred
occurred
weapons/between October 3 and October 14?

Mr. McCone. No, sir.

Mr. Lipscomb. It did not occur then?

Mr. McCone. No, it did not. There was a build-up in that time.

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but there was a massive build-up before then. I said yesterday it is our judgment now that the first offensive missiles arrived in Cuba about September 8, and the reports on these we received about September 21st. Those reports were refugee and agent reports and had to be verified. They were not verified until October 14. The orders went out for the flights to verify them on October 4, but weather intervened and, therefore, we were not able to.

Mr. Lipstomb. Was the information Mr. Ball gave to the Select Committee on Export Control on October 4 in error?

Mr. McCone. I cannot say that without studying it very carefully. I have not seen that record and I could not comment on that.

Mr. Mahon. Mr. Whitten has a question.

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